

News Release

National Wildlife Refuge System



Carolina Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge

23734 US Highway 1
McBee, SC 29101
843.335.8401
843.335.8406 fax

Notice of Availability

The Carolina Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) proposes to change current fishing regulations to include the seasonal opening of Martins Lake. Under the existing approved plan, Martins Lake is closed to all public entry to minimize disturbance to waterfowl. Under the proposed amended guidelines, Martins Lake would be open to recreational fishing from March 1 through September 30 annually. Martins Lake would remain closed to public entry from October 1 through the end of February to serve as a sanctuary for wintering waterfowl.

Prior to 2000, Martins Lake was seasonally opened. In 2000, refuge staff closed Martins Lake year-round to public entry to provide an undisturbed area for waterfowl. Surveys show that peak waterfowl usage occurs only seasonally and that re-opening the lake to limited recreational fishing would not disturb any waterfowl species. All existing regulations for fishing on a national wildlife refuge as outlined in our Fishing Regulations Brochure will govern this activity should the amended plan be accepted and found compatible with the refuge's establishing purposes.

The Fishing Plan (2000), Amendment (2006), and Draft Compatibility Determination are available for public review at the Refuge Administrative Office located at 23734 US Highway 1, four miles East of McBee, SC. Comments on the proposed amendment and draft compatibility determination should be directed to Refuge Manager, Carolina Sandhills NWR, 23734 US Highway 1, McBee, SC 29407 or via or e-mail FW4RWCarolinaSandhills@fws.gov. All comments must be received by Friday, November 10, 2006.

Carolina Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge is a 46,000-acre longleaf pine forest managed primarily for the red-cockaded woodpecker, a federally endangered species. In addition to the longleaf pine-wiregrass ecosystem, refuge habitats include streamside pocosins, open fields, hardwood ridges, wetlands and open water ponds. This mosaic of habitats provides for the needs of more than 190 species of birds, 42 species of mammals, 41 species of reptiles, and 25 species of amphibians. The refuge is located in Chesterfield County. Carolina Sandhills NWR is one of more than 540 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

End of Release